

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN IMPROVED SYSTEM IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF RESIDENCES FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES.

THE proportion which house-rent bears to other items of expenditure, is probably much greater with most inhabitants of the metropolis than those of provincial towns. It is true that this arises, not entirely from causes which it is in our power to remove, but from those which are inseparable from all densely-populated places, from the continual influx of new residents, and from competition for the advantages of central situations. And it is also probable, that the constant desire, which many feel, of appearing better off in the world than they really are,—a desire which is often so contemptible, and to which every real comfort of life is sacrificed,—contributes to prevent alteration. A stranger from a country town, walking through the streets of London, and seeing houses of nothing less than four or five stories in height, naturally wonders where the poor, or the working population, live. He turns out of the great arteries into streets of second and third rate character, but still the houses are on a similar scale, such as he would hardly consider suitable for those, who possess only a moderate income from the source of a trade or profession. He has always seen streets of small houses, inhabited by the industrious classes, within a moderate distance of the localities where their employments lay; but for any thing of that description he may long look in vain in the metropolis, and will not readily find a solution of the mystery.

The evils which result from houses having been built exclusively for the rich, affect painfully the condition of the poor, and are the occasion of constant embarrassment in every class of society. The industrious workman, instead of possessing a comfortable home, suited to his income, but so situated and constructed as to be inimical to the health of his children, or having those advantages which, in any well-regulated community, should be common to both rich and poor, is compelled to live over a stable, or to crowd his family into a cellar, or a single back room. In all classes, whether the tenement be a house or a lodging, the rent-day exacts a much larger proportion of the income than it might under a proper system; and the residue is felt by an immense number of persons, as quite insufficient for those necessities, which would otherwise, and ought to claim a less stinted expenditure. Now, we believe it is perfectly feasible to effect a very important saving in the matter of rent, and also materially to add to the comfort of all classes, and that, too, without diminishing the profits of landlords and others, who might be supposed to be interested in keeping things as they at present are.

In London, houses are often ill-adapted even for residents whose income is sufficient; but provision for the different kinds of accommodation required by other persons, has clearly not been attempted. The lofty houses and the appearance of wealth every where, may impose upon the stranger, but the published reports of societies and commissions, and far more that deeper misery, which never meets the public eye, would at once urge the necessity for a different plan. That change then, simply is, to build residences adapted to the different wants of every class.

Though the notions of some people might, for the present, suffer a shock, all would soon become reconciled to a system having less pretension, perhaps, but bringing to most persons conveniences which they could hardly fail to estimate. As would observe a witty writer, who has done something to moderate the excessive passion for "an appearance" in "the world" he satirizes, the present system imposes upon no one who can look at all within: if I take a four-storied house, and live in the back parlour or the kitchen, who is deceived by it, except a countryman: if in a second-door,—

"Content with little, I can piddle here

On brocoli and mutton round the year."

Why should I fear all the world knowing it?

If the value of land in the metropolis would prevent a sufficient return of rent from houses of less than four or five stories, the continental system of living in flats could be resorted to. With this arrangement there are no inconveniences which can be compared with those already in existence; and the convenience and

comfort which is experienced in rooms *en suite* would amply compensate for the trouble of ascent, even to a residence at as high a level, as many of those in the houses of Paris. There would be a general staircase, and a porter's box at the entrance; and it would be quite possible to contrive the means of access, so that as much privacy would be ensured as could be desired. Every advantage of the single residence, as regards drainage, and even supply of water, could be given in each suite of the building proposed; whilst a little consideration will show, that a great saving might be effected in construction. For example, in three houses, the same number of staircases is required, but in a large building for an equal number of persons, probably not more than half the space would be so appropriated by the single staircase.

It is true that actually this is the manner in which most houses in London are occupied; but as they have been built each for a single family, the inconveniences are great, and can only be understood by those who are compelled to suffer them. In the arrangement proposed, the staircase would be of large size, and expressly contrived for its purpose of a public thoroughfare, whilst the *suites* of rooms opening out from it would be complete residences in themselves. In some of the houses at present let in sets of chambers, part of the advantages proposed are already to be had, but they are none of them adapted for families, whilst not having been devised for the purpose which they serve, they cannot be expected to have all the conveniences here contemplated. The small number of such places adapted for business purposes is also a great impediment to professional men, not only as regards rent, but from the difficulty of procuring suitable accommodation; and if a number of buildings were erected, especially adapted for the object, these alone would bring in a good interest on the investment.—But it is probable that many would prefer the plan of building outside galleries of access to each floor, with external stairs, mentioned in the report of the Health of Towns Commission, and again suggested recently. The advantages here would be, that each residence would have a separate door, opening out from the gallery, so that each tenant would be able to ensure himself strict privacy, and would have great convenience for carrying on his occupation. In some cases, shops would be opened, similar to those in the ground story, as the galleries would be, in many cases, of considerable extent, and would be frequented by a sufficient number of residents and strangers, to ensure profit in certain kinds of business. Still, though all persons would have the opportunity of passing along them, they would not be crowded, and might perhaps afford a play-ground for children,—a want much felt by many poor families.* We believe that such residences might be built with little sacrifice of light in the rooms, and whole streets might be so designed that architectural effect would be improved.

It is to be regretted that, in all public improvements, and the opening of new lines of streets, the comfort of the poor and industrious classes is not considered, as well as the architectural improvement of the town. It is found that these great streets have not been formed without an increase of misery amongst the poor, who were previously the occupiers of the ground, and it seems never to have occurred to any one, that there was a most favourable opportunity for building dwellings on some principle such as we have before recommended. It is to be hoped that no future occasion will be allowed to pass, of doing a simple act of justice to those who are at present suffering from the results of late "improvements." Like certain attempts at ventilation, which perhaps attain their object, but at the expense of health, these streets have purified bad neighbourhoods, shortened distances, and added to the appearance of the town, to inflict upon those who were already sufficiently wretched, evils immeasurably greater than any which the promoters have removed from themselves.

The principle we wish to enforce, then, is that of providing, under various modifications,

* We take this opportunity of remarking upon the increasing want of public play-grounds. Accidents are continually occurring in the public streets, and many children are enticed away from home by the companions they meet. On the other hand, the evil of the want of exercise is great. A large increase in the number of infant schools is much to be desired.

for the wants of each class—so that any individual may domicile himself in a convenient neighbourhood, at a greatly reduced expense—instead of building only for one description of want, and one class of tenants. To effect some of these objects—in the manner which may best meet individual tastes, it may be desirable to erect many different kinds of buildings, as well as to consider carefully the system to be adopted in the management of those which are to receive an associated community, and it may be our object, in a future number, to consider some practical suggestions, having immediate reference to the development of this feature in the proposal.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THIRTY infant schools are to be established by an association of the clergy and others at Birmingham, at an average expense of 300*l.* from the local fund, besides grants from the National Society and the Privy Council, for each room that is to be built. Thirty sites have been selected, and a moiety of the necessary funds (4,000*l.*) has been already subscribed.—Holy Cross Church, Pershore, has been enlarged and beautified, or at least divested of the old beautification, whitewash, &c. Some of the massive dark granite pillars, which ran up the aisles, have been thus restored to their primitive contrast and relief, compared with the rest of the interior, and give the whole edifice a different aspect from what it previously presented.—On Friday week, during the heavy gale, the spire of Tregaron Church was completely blown off.—On the same day, and by the same cause, the tall chimney at the Lifford Chemical Works, near King's Norton, was blown down.—St. James's Church, Bath, is about to be restored, at an expense of 2,000*l.*, by the Rector, aided by private contributions. It will have an Italian tower, 150 feet in height.—On Wednesday week, a fifth church out of the ten to be erected at Manchester was founded in Butler-street, Bradford-road. It is to be of large size, and named St. Philips.—The new chapel of St. James, erected by subscription at Fairburn, parish of Ledbam, and consecrated on the 17th ult., is a plain edifice, consisting of a nave, chancel, and south aisle, and built of stone from the neighbouring quarry of Peckfield. It has two stained-glass windows, by Ward, of London; and a third, by Wailes, of Newcastle, is shortly to be added.—The fund for the restoration of the parish church of Scarborough has reached 2,100*l.*, and steadily increases. The committee propose to limit the expenditure to 3,500*l.* Upwards of forty applications for instructions have been received from architects in all parts of the country. The works are to be confined to the area of the existing walls. All the galleries are to be removed, though none of the usual amount of accommodation will be sacrificed. The windows are to be restored after the best architectural remains of the church. The plans are to be sent in not later than 1st Feb. next.—The ancient grievance of exorbitant expectation, if not equally exorbitant demand, of payment to domestics for the exhibition of Holyrood Palace at Edinburgh, which has prevented many a respectable citizen of Edinburgh itself, as well as many of its occasional visitors, from witnessing the remains of its ancient royalty there and elsewhere preserved, is still persisted in, although complaints have frequently been made to the Duke of Hamilton, the hereditary keeper, of the existence and the hardship of such a grievance. It is even "confidently asserted, in this city," says the *Edinburgh Register*, "that an offer was made to the housekeeper—not the duke but his domestic—to furnish the exhibition of the palace at an annual rent." The municipal authorities have found it advisable to pass a resolution expressive of their opinion that the payment of 1*s.* by each party, not exceeding six, to each exhibitor, is adequate remuneration.—It is said that the corners of mouldings and pieces of corbel heads in several of the galleries of the Scott Monument at Edinburgh have been chipped off; while letters have been rudely carved into the stone in various parts of the building!—It has been resolved, by the Northern Light-house Board, to erect five new lighthouses; one upon the Island of Sanna, off the Mull of Kintyre, to